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## REPORT ON THE SCANDINAVIAN LANGUAGES IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOLS

As this Committee<sup>1</sup> is working upon a fuller report specifically relative to texts and qualifications of teachers the following facts from the report submitted at the last annual meeting of the Society for the Advancement of Scandinavian Study are here offered as a preliminary report.

It will aim chiefly to show the present status of Scandinavian in the secondary schools and therefore to supplement the paper by Professor Flom printed in this Journal, No. 3, pp. 107-122. Practically no data on the subject are given by official reports of school inspectors or superintendents, we have had to rely upon correspondence, newspaper accounts, and such other information relative to the work as we could gather. About a year ago a list of high schools where Scandinavian had been introduced was drawn up and to this list have been added new schools as they have been reported. To get accurate data it was decided to direct letters of inquiry to all these schools. Since this movement is still young and much uncertainty exists not only in regard to the number of schools offering courses but also in regard to text books, methods, public sentiment with reference to the whole matter, available teachers and the like, it was decided to make the questionnaire sent out quite comprehensive in scope. It contained twenty-five questions; first relative to the teacher's training in Scandinavian; the rank of school where now teaching—high school, graded or semi-graded; what year Scandinavian was begun; if introduced by reason of petition on the part of Scandinavians or by act of the board without petition; how many classes were first organized and what their total enrollment; which one of the Scandinavian languages was studied; if more than one language, how many pupils in each; how many classes at present and what their total enrollment and hours for each class per week. Then followed questions relative to the nationality of the parents, as Scandinavian, mixed or American; attitude of the community; interest of the pupils; text books used; difficulties encountered, etc.

Prompt and in most cases very full reports were returned. The remarkable thing happened that all except two of the forty persons to whom blanks were sent sent answers in a very short time.

I shall briefly summarize the data derived from these questionnaires. The following table gives the schools having classes in Scandinavian and the number taking the subject in each:

### Minnesota—

| Minneapolis   | Norwegian | Swedish |
|---------------|-----------|---------|
| Central ..... | 27        | 45      |
| East .....    | 48        | 46      |

<sup>1</sup> See Proceedings, p. 126.

|                         |     |     |
|-------------------------|-----|-----|
| North .....             | 23  | 50  |
| South .....             | 131 | 136 |
| St. Paul. Johnson ..... |     | 112 |
| Willmar .....           | 6   | 13  |
| Fosston .....           | 13  |     |
| Dawson .....            | 17  |     |
| Cokato .....            |     | 66  |
| Watson .....            | 3   |     |
| Lindstrom .....         |     | 9   |
| Milan .....             | 9   |     |
| Crookston .....         | 10  |     |
| Benson .....            | 25  |     |
| Henning .....           | 8   | 30  |
| Lanesboro .....         | 28  |     |
| Thief River Falls ..... | 10  |     |
| Svea .....              |     | 18  |
| Illinois—               |     |     |
| Chicago .....           |     | 48  |
| Carl Schurz .....       | 58  |     |
| Moline .....            |     | 23  |
| Rockford .....          |     | 20  |
| Iowa—                   |     |     |
| Story City .....        | 45  |     |
| Decorah .....           | 14  |     |
| Stanton .....           |     | 20  |
| Wisconsin—              |     |     |
| Stoughton .....         | 35  |     |
| Stanley .....           | 14  |     |
| North Dakota—           |     |     |
| Grand Forks .....       | 30  |     |

It will thus be seen that there are six schools that have courses in both Swedish and Norwegian with an enrollment of 243 for Norwegian and 320 for Swedish. Norwegian alone is found in fourteen schools with an enrollment of 311 and Swedish alone in eight schools with an enrollment of 316. This makes a total for Norwegian of 554 and for Swedish of 636 or a total for the two languages of 28 schools and 1190 students.

In 1910 when Scandinavian classes were begun for the first time in five high schools the total enrollment was 203. In 1911 classes were organized in 8 high schools and in 1912 in 14. In only one or two cases where classes have been organized over a year has there been a decrease in number of students. In some cases the growth has been very marked, notably in South Side High School, Minneapolis, where Norwegian and Swedish began with 40 and 22 respectively whereas the enrollment is now 131 and 136. It may be of interest to note that 45 students taking Scandinavian are non-Scandinavian, i. e. neither father nor mother is Scandinavian.

The following texts are used listed in the order of number of schools where used:

Swedish—Vickner's *Swedish Grammar*; Lagerlöf: *En Herrgårds-sågen*—Elmquist's edition; Geijerstam: *Mina Pojkar*—Alexis's edition; Lagerlöf: *Nils Holgersson*—Elmquist's edition; Elmquist's *Swedish Grammar*; Nyblom: *Det Ringer*—Elmquist's edition; Grimberg: *Sveriges Historia*.

Norwegian—Holvik's *Beginning Norse & 2d Year Norse*; Michellet's *Norse Grammar*; Eikeland's *Grammatik*; Rolfsen's *Læsebog*; Bjørnson: *Synnøve Solbakken*—Flom's edition; Haereds *Norges Historie*; Bjørnson: *En Glad Gut*; Bjørnson: *Fortællinger*; Throndsen: *Læsebok*; Lie: *Fortællinger*; Broch & Seip: *Læsebog*.

The complaint is general and naturally so, that not sufficient texts with vocabularies and notes are available. Every teacher spoke of this. Almost as many complained of the lack of suitable dictionaries. Many and valuable suggestions were made in regard to new texts. Of these nearly all spoke of the desirability of having some short and easy texts of Scandinavian poems, folk songs, fairy tales and short stories with notes and vocabularies. The need of a book containing conversational exercises was emphasized. Specific recommendations for edited texts are: Geijerstam's *Boken om Lille Bror*, Bjørnson's *En Fallit* and *En Glad Gut*, Aanrud's *Sidsel Sidserk*, Haereds *Norges Historie*, Broch & Seip's *Læsebog i Morsmaalet*, Knudson's *Uvalg af Norsk Litteratur*, Lagerlöf's *Jerusalem*.

In regard to the question whether there are any special difficulties met with in the teaching of Scandinavian their answers nearly all agreed, as was expected, that the unequal preparation of the pupils presents a trying problem, especially where only one course is given. Some come into the classes as beginners entirely and others can speak and write the language quite readily and have read considerably in the language. How is one to properly take care of such a class? Many who have just a little speaking knowledge of the language take for granted they know it well and hence need not study at first. That very necessary but sometimes difficult process of convincing these that they do not know when they think they do must then be begun in earnest.

In answer to the question "Do the Scandinavians of the community as a whole take as much interest in the study of Scandinavian as ought to be shown," eleven answer affirmatively and ten in the negative. On the next point, "What seems to be the general attitude of the community toward the study of foreign languages," ten answer that much interest is shown, and four say that people as a whole are indifferent. In answer to the question: "What seems to be the attitude specially of the pupils of the school with reference to Scandinavian," fourteen sent answers that the subject is popular and commands the respect of the student body. Two complain that indifference is shown. The reasons assigned why pupils take Scandinavian are numerous. Most

teachers place the influence of the parents first. Next in order comes the desire to learn the language for practical purposes. Practically all the teachers say that some pupils take it because they think the study will be easy. In one school where the matter was submitted to the pupils themselves the results were: 70% took it because of interest in the language of the fathers; 20% for use in business, and 10% to get credit or because some one else took the subject.

In all schools, apparently, Scandinavian is placed on the same basis as other modern foreign languages. In one place, Cokato, Minn., Swedish is compulsory for all pupils in the eighth grade.

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